

Please amend claim 42 to read as follows:

42. (Once Amended) A method for the preparation of a linear phosphorus-linked oligomer comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing a solid support;
- (b) attaching a 5'-O-protected nucleoside to the solid support;
- (c) deprotecting the 5'-hydroxyl of the nucleoside with a deprotecting reagent comprising dichloroacetic acid in toluene;
- (d) reacting the deprotected 5'-hydroxyl with an 5'-protected activated phosphorus compound to produce a covalent linkage therebetween;
- (e) oxidizing or sulfurizing the covalent linkage to form a phosphodiester, phosphorothioate, phosphorodithioate or H-phosphonate linkage;
- (f) repeating steps c through e at least once for subsequent couplings of additional activated phosphorus compounds, to produce the completed phosphorus-linked oligomer; and
- (g) cleaving the oligomer from the solid support;

wherein steps (b) through (f) are performed using an automated device;

wherein said oligomer is a linear oligomer.

REMARKS

Claims 1-42 are pending in the present application. Claim 42 has been amended to replace the acronym "DCA" with "dichloroacetic acid", as suggested in the Office Action. Support can be found, for example, in the Examples in the specification.